

ROADS

In 1919, there were no transcontinental highways. The route directed for the convoy was the proposed location of the Lincoln Highway (now US-30) which at that time existed largely in the imagination and on paper.

Of the entire distance traversed, 1,778 miles or 54.7 per cent of the mileage was made over dirt roads, wheel paths, mountain trails, desert sands and alkali flats. Of this distance, over 500 miles was practically impassable to the heavy vehicles which were included in the convoy, and was negotiated only through the combined efforts of the most extraordinary character on the part of the personnel. It frequently was necessary to pull and push the vehicles by man-power over wide areas of gumbo mud in the central states and across the desert lands of the far west, for many hours at a time, and to laboriously construct wheel paths of timber, canvas, sage brush or grass for long distances. On a number of days the personnel labored from fifteen to twenty-four hours to accomplish the pre-arranged forced-march itinerary.

There were also encountered hundreds of miles of mountain trails some of the most dangerous character with steep grades, and numerous sharp turns, where a deviation from the wheel paths meant destruction in the depths below. On the alkali flats dust up to 2 feet in depth was passed through, while in other localities quicksands were encountered in which certain of the trucks sank to depths up to several feet and had to be rescued by timber, rope and chain tackle and jacks.

